

**Bruegel: The Complete Paintings, Drawings and Prints.** By Manfred Sellink. 304 pp. incl. 200 col. + 97 b. & w. ills. (Ludion, Ghent, 2007), €110. ISBN 978-90-5544-686-5.

Reviewed by WALTER S. GIBSON

A LEADING BRUEGEL scholar and co-curator of the magisterial exhibition of Bruegel's graphic work held in Rotterdam and New York in 2001,<sup>1</sup> Manfred Sellink has produced a monograph that is at once a reference book and a sumptuously illustrated and authoritative introduction to the artist. The volume opens with a survey of Bruegel's life and art that concludes with a succinct but valuable account of his posthumous fame and influence. This is followed by a complete catalogue of his work, including the prints for which his original designs have not survived. The final sections comprise a chronology of the artist's life, Karel van Mander's 1604 biography of the artist, a selected bibliography emphasising recent publications, and finally several indices.

In the informative biography, Sellink situates Bruegel's life and work firmly within their historical context, including his contacts, through the cartographer Abraham Ortelius and the print publisher Hieronymus Cock, with humanist circles in Antwerp. Although no '*pictor doctus*' himself, as too frequently assumed, Bruegel was nonetheless an intelligent and supremely inventive artist who interpreted even his most overtly moralising subject-matter with considerable originality and pictorial wit. A major source of inspiration, especially for his designs for prints, came from the popular dramas of the Netherlandish rhetoricians. Sellink navigates adroitly through the conflicting interpretations of Bruegel's art, wisely concluding that 'perhaps the reflections of his time should be sought not in concrete allusions but rather in the revealing of man's shortcomings and moral weaknesses'.

The catalogue presents Bruegel's paintings, drawings and prints after his designs in chronological order, each entry illustrated, in colour where appropriate and often supplemented by revealing details, and accompanied by a short but comprehensive discussion. Among the authentic paintings, Sellink accepts the recently published *Drunken peasant pushed into a pigsty* (cat. no.62), as well as the seldom-discussed *Three soldier-musicians* (no.174; Fig.31), a charming grisaille panel in the Frick Collection, New York. Sellink also cautiously reaffirms the attribution of two of the *Large landscape* prints, the *Nudinae rusticorum* and *Fuga Deiparae in Aegyptum* (nos.33 and 34), whose status as authentic Bruegel designs was questioned in the Rotterdam–New York catalogue of 2001.<sup>2</sup> He also endorses Martin Royaltan-Kisch's attribution to Bruegel of the *Journey to Emmaus* (no.99), a drawing in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, as well as the drawings, now lost, for

two other prints engraved and published posthumously by Philips Galle, the *Road to Emmaus* and the *Triumph of Saturn* (nos.174 and 175), both of which have been occasionally doubted in the past.

Conversely, a number of traditional attributions are here accepted with reservations or rejected outright. They include the *Parable of the sower* (no.61; Timken Museum of Art, San Diego), whose style, Sellink notes, does not agree with its inscribed date of 1557, although he admits that later over-painting and restorations make a final decision difficult. In the case of another putative early work, the *Christ appearing to his disciples on the sea of Tiberias* (no.X1), technical examination of the painting in 2006 (apparently not yet published at the time Sellink wrote) confirms the long-held suspicion that it is 'a far later imitation or forgery'. The damaged and controversial



31. *Three soldier-musicians*, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. 1568. Panel, 20.32 by 17.78 cm. (Frick Collection, New York).

Brussels *Epiphany* (no.X2) is also rejected, although it is possibly, as Sellink suggests, based on a lost Bruegel composition. Similarly, the Brussels *Fall of Icarus* (no.X3) and a replica in the Van Buuren Museum, also in Brussels, may possibly be copies made c.1600 after another Bruegel original. Also rejected is the *Yawning man* (no.X4); Sellink may well be correct, although I am hesitant to accept, as he does, Ertz's attribution of this exquisitely painted little panel to Pieter Bruegel the Younger. Other doubtful paintings include the *View of Naples* (no.X7; Palazzo Doria, Rome) and the Stockholm *Peasants attacked by bandits* (no.X8), the latter despite a 'barely decipherable signature', as well as the Vienna *Storm at sea* (no.X9). Among the 'problematic drawings', Sellink accepts Fritz Koreny's attribution of the long-contested *Damned in Hell* and *Christ carrying the Cross* (nos.XI2 and XI4) to the circle of Dieric Bouts, c.1460–70, a designation that I hope will definitively remove these sheets from future discussions of Bruegel's drawings.

In short, this is a well-balanced and illuminating survey. The first stop for anyone seeking information on Bruegel, Sellink's book will also reward its more leisurely perusal by the scholar and art lover.

<sup>1</sup> N.M. Orenstein, ed.: exh. cat. *Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Drawings and Prints*, Rotterdam (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen), and New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art), 2001; reviewed in this Magazine, 144 (2002), pp.50–53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.133–35, nos.33 and 34.

**Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, später Papst Urban VIII, und die Entstehung des römischen Hochbarock (Römische Forschungen der Bibliotheca Hertziana, XXXII).** By Sebastian Schütze. 375 pp. incl. 304 b. & w. ills. (Hirmer Verlag, Munich, 2007), €125. ISBN 978-3-7774-9670-2.

Reviewed by PHILIPPE MALGOUYRES

IF ONE IS to believe its title, this book is intended to shed light on the role of Cardinal Maffeo Barberini in the transformation of art in Rome in the first decades of the seventeenth century, before his accession to the papal throne as Urban VIII. Although the concept of 'Roman high Baroque' is not otherwise explained, one can assume that it chiefly comprises the works produced as a result of the association between Urban VIII and Bernini. Whatever the answer, the period under discussion is that between his nomination as a cardinal in 1606 (when he was serving as papal nuncio in Paris) up to his election as pope in 1623. Three topics are considered: the decoration of the family chapel in S. Andrea della Valle, the cardinal's collection as far as it is known from various inventories, and Bernini's first works. For this last chapter, as the author honestly admits, the documents were already published in 1998 in the catalogue of the exhibition *Bernini scultore. La nascita del barocco in Casa Borghese*,<sup>1</sup> even if it seems paradoxical that the same texts were used then to demonstrate the birth of Roman Baroque under the auspices of the Borghese family and now under the Barberini. The link between the sculptures in question and Maffeo Barberini is not immediately obvious, apart from the *St Sebastian* in the Thyssen collection. Other characters would deserve more attention, as the author notes, such as Leone Strozzi, perhaps the first owner of *St Lawrence*, and other collectors who owned several statues by Pietro Bernini:<sup>2</sup> a *St John the Baptist*, a group of *Hercules and Antaeus* and 'due figure nude dal naturale i Adamo, et Eva col Serpente in un gruppo moderno alto palmi otto', which can be identified with the group now in the museum at Le Mans (Fig.32).<sup>3</sup>

The account of the decoration of the chapel in S. Andrea della Valle illustrates the social and aesthetic ambitions of the new prelate. However, the choice of certain artists

## BOOKS



32. *Adam, Eve and the serpent*, by Pietro Bernini. c.1620. Marble, 188 by 85 by 65 cm. (Musée du Louvre, Paris; on deposit at Musée de Tessé, Le Mans).

does not seem innovative. For example, the family attempted to obtain a painting by Barocci as the altarpiece, but finally it was Passignano who executed all the decoration, a choice that, without being *retardataire*, was fairly conventional and emphasises the family's Florentine origins. No more adventurous was the initial choice of sculptors: Cristoforo Stati, Ambrogio Buonvicino or Nicolas Cordier could not be described as very advanced sculptors at that date. Pietro Bernini was only called upon after the death of Cordier. The presence of Mochi is more interesting, given his importance as a sculptor. The decoration of the chapel is set in the context of that of the decoration of the Theatines' church and more generally in the decoration of the chapels of noble families in Rome and Florence. Some of the most original aspects of the Barberini chapel are perhaps underestimated. For example, the marble decoration is certainly linked to the decoration of the great papal chapels of the turn of the seventeenth century but it is markedly different: in the papal chapels the '*marmi di scavi*' of the most varied possible types are combined in compositions of great geometric rigour, the austerity of the design seeming to enhance the precious materials. In the Barberini chapel the marble facing serves a chromatic function. It is mostly yellow Sienese marble with alabaster panels and *verde antico* pilasters and columns which creates a sumptuous frame for the paintings and sculptures but does not assume the symbolic function of the marble decoration of the preceding decades. It is enough to compare it

with the adjacent Rucellai chapel which, indeed, is cited as a point of reference in the contract.<sup>4</sup> From that point of view the Barberini chapel is innovative and marble decoration in seventeenth-century Rome evolved from its example. It is a question of making aesthetic decisions given the practical and financial constraints implicit in using such expensive antique marbles. The niches which, according to the first design, should have been veneered with '*mischio africano oscuro*' are simply faced with '*nero di Belgio*'. Together with Bartolomeo Bassi, the Milanese Gaspare Saracco (a member of the celebrated Saracchi family of gemstone engravers) was asked to cut the hardest and most delicate stones, perhaps such details as the cardinal's coat of arms on a lapis background with the cardinal's hat in *rosso antico*. The most remarkable symbolic element, and the most significant of the dynastic ambitions of the chapel has also been slightly overlooked: the medallion portraits of the cardinal's parents made in porphyry by Tommaso Fedele. Their model was the series of posthumous dynastic portraits of the Medici family made in porphyry by Giovanni Ferrucci (Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence).<sup>5</sup> This appropriation is particularly significant: the relationship with the ruling family of Florence, the purple used by both emperors and cardinals, and the prestige attached to the working of this material, by far and away the most precious stone used in the chapel.

The most stimulating section of the book is that on Maffeo's collection, or rather the publication of the inventories made in 1604, 1608 and 1623, marking three important moments in Maffeo's life. The first of these is unpublished and the two others have been rechecked and edited with great care. Reading them *in extenso* gives a vivid image of the cardinal's possessions, even if it is not always possible to enthuse on their opulence and variety: the antiquities are negligible in quantity, and seemingly in quality; there is little metalwork (with the exception of the silver-gilt *buffet* presented by Henry IV of France in 1607), gemstones or de luxe objects. There is no furniture decorated with *pietre dure*, no precious cabinets, merely some chairs and small tables. For the purchases made in Paris, particularly the tapestries, it is necessary to consult Pascal-François Bertrand's book, which is not cited in the bibliography.<sup>6</sup> It emerges that the cardinal bought, rather than collected, sets of tapestries of little commercial value to furnish his rooms. Apart from his paintings – the most studied aspect of Barberini collecting<sup>7</sup> – the most interesting item is the inventory of his library, revealing the cardinal's literary aspirations, an aspect that is also well analysed, in particular the four pages illustrating his books' frontispieces (pp.20–23). The inventories are complemented by excerpts from other archives, sales catalogues and correspondence published in an appendix.

The book suffers from its academic character (originally it was a doctoral thesis) and

from the fact that its publication has been delayed by over a decade: its bibliography has been updated, but recent discoveries could not be properly integrated into the text. Its most innovative aspects are sometimes swamped by too generalised observations and some new lines of investigation have not been explored.<sup>8</sup> But the overall picture of the cardinal's artistic undertakings is convincing and almost contradicts the book's title: nothing, or very few, of the works he commissioned while cardinal would lead one to anticipate the extraordinary artistic renaissance that occurred in the reign of Urban VIII. But this is a compliment to his intelligence: he knew, once he was on St Peter's throne, how to give full flight to his talents and ambitions. In recognising Bernini as the '*Michel'Angelo del suo tempo*', the pope showed a touch of genius himself and realised how artist and pontiff could themselves become the authors of their reciprocal glory.

<sup>1</sup> A. Coliva and S. Schütze: exh. cat. *Bernini scultore. La nascita del barocco in Casa Borghese*, Rome (Villa Borghese), 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Document cited in *ibid.*, p.208, ASF, Carte Stroziane, V, vol.779, no.5.

<sup>3</sup> P. Manguyres: "Adam, Eve et le serpent", un groupe inédit de Pietro Bernini", *Revue de L'Art* 151/1 (2006), pp.65–71.

<sup>4</sup> The project and the commission were analysed by A. Di Castro: 'Rivestimenti e tarsie marmoree a Rome tra il Cinquecento e il Seicento', *Marmorari e argentieri a Roma e nel Lazio tra Cinquecento e Seicento. I committenti, i documenti, le opere*, Rome 1994, pp.33–35.

<sup>5</sup> S.B. Butters: *The Triumph of Vulcan. Sculptors' Tools, Porphyry, and the Prince in Ducal Florence*, Florence 1996, pp.306–15. Apropos Imperial symbolism, see the *Portrait of Charles V* (Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris) in P. Manguyres: exh. cat. *Porphyre. La pierre pourpre des Ptolémées aux Bonaparte*, Paris (Musée du Louvre), 2003–04, pp.102–03 and (for Tommaso Fedele) p.107.

<sup>6</sup> P.-F. Bertrand: *Les tapisseries des Barberini et la décoration d'intérieur dans la Rome baroque*, Turnhout 2005, pp.33–36.

<sup>7</sup> The Caravaggesque portrait of the cardinal (Galleria Corsini, Florence), wrongly attributed to Nicodemus Ferrucci (p.152, fig.188) is rightly given to Prospero Orsi by C. Whitfield: 'Prospero Orsi, interprète du Caravage', *Revue de l'Art* 155/1 (2007), p.13.

<sup>8</sup> The author rightly emphasises that the Farnese family served as a model for the Barberini (p.30, note 108), noting that it is a point that has been overlooked, but does not investigate it.

**Karel Du Jardin.** By Jennifer M. Kilian. 80 pp. incl. 56 col. + 3 b. & w. ills. (Nieuw Amsterdam Publishers and the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2007), €17.95. ISBN 978-90-8689-030-9.

Reviewed by ERIK SPAANS

THE RECENT KAREL du Jardin exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (closed 16th March 2008), was accompanied by a richly illustrated, small and affordable publication on the artist. The book contains a biographical chapter on Du Jardin and a chapter on his